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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 001274

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [BM](#) [JP](#)

SUBJECT: JAPANESE AMBASSADOR RAISES POLITICAL TRANSITION
AND ECONOMIC REFORM WITH THAN SHWE

REF: TOKYO 5480

Classified By: COM Carmen Martinez. Reason: 1.5 (d).

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary: Japanese Ambassador Yuji Miyamoto delivered a message from Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi when he presented his credentials to Than Shwe on September 16. According to sources at the Japanese Embassy, Miyamoto also went into some detail about political transition, Japanese aid, and economic reform in Burma. End Summary.

[¶](#)2. (C) Japanese Aid: Koizumi's letter made three points. It reaffirmed the historic friendship between Japan and Burma; it emphasized the importance of motion towards democracy; and it reiterated Foreign Minister Kawaguchi's offer to give special consideration to any aid projects that were agreed between the NLD and the government. According to Koizumi's letter, such projects would be handled "outside normal channels," meaning that they would be approved and funded at no cost to Japan's normal aid budget in Burma. Such projects would be, according to the letter, a pure bonus for the country.

[¶](#)3. (C) Economic Reform: The Ambassador, on his own, raised economic reform issues. He noted that Japan was finalizing its report on Structural Adjustment in Burma and asked Than Shwe to consider reading it in full. Than Shwe simply nodded at that suggestion.

[¶](#)4. (C) Political Transition: Than Shwe told the Ambassador that the GOB was committed to democratization. However, he made no promises regarding the pace or timetable for change. Rather, he emphasized that national unity, education, and economic development had to come before democracy. Burma had failed in the past, he argued, because it had not been ready for western-style democracy. He wanted to be sure this time that it did not fail again.

[¶](#)5. (C) Comment: Miyamoto made good use of his time with Than Shwe, delivering messages that need to get through, but which rarely reach Than Shwe. The Japanese have also obviously done some thinking about the best way to encourage cooperation between the government and the NLD. Hence, the offer of aid on basically no-cost terms. End Comment.
Martinez